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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(8.4.2021)

The financial support to the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) is an important part of the EU's political and financial activities to complement and support Government actions in addressing the critical security situation. The EU meets regularly with the SIU in the context of this project to monitor its advances in institutional strengthening as well as in policy results. Furthermore, the EU holds a regular dialogue with the General Attorney's Office and the Director of the SIU in different formats. The SIU was established under the 2016 peace agreement to dismantle criminal organisations attacking human right defenders and all those who work for peace building. Crimes against trade unionists are not included.

The EU is in close dialogue with the Government on the protection of women and girls. Women's rights are also one of the priorities of the EU Human Rights and Democracy Strategy in Colombia. A safe and enabling environment for women human rights defenders has been one of the objectives of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) II and is likely to be an objective also of GAP III. Women human rights defenders represent furthermore a large share of the cases supported under the campaign #DefendamosLaVida. These are only some of the EU's efforts to support and complement Colombia's programme of guarantees for women leaders and human rights defenders.

Under the Trade Agreements<sup>1</sup> Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter, the EU closely monitors the developments related to the right of freedom of association and continues to discuss with Colombia ways of improving the situation as regards trade union discrimination and violence against trade union leaders. The issue was on the agenda of the Trade Committee and Trade sub-committee held with Colombia in November 2020<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 354, 21.12.2012, pp. 3-2607; in accordance with Council Decision 2012/735/EU (OJ L 354, 21.12.2012, p. 1-2) the Agreement has been provisionally applied with Colombia from 1 August 2013 OJ L 56, 28.2.2013, p. 1-1).

<sup>2</sup> [https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2021/january/tradoc\\_159256.pdf](https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2021/january/tradoc_159256.pdf)  
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